

Washington, DC - U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), chairman of the House Sugar Reform Caucus, today renewed his call to end the federal sugar program after the Department of Commerce revealed such policies cost more than 10,000 jobs, many in the Chicago area.

Kirk's provision in the Fiscal Year 2005 appropriations bill directed the Secretary of Commerce to report on the link between federal laws requiring high sugar prices and job loss in America. The report, using data from 1997 to 2002, found that for each sugar growing job saved through artificially high U.S. sugar prices, nearly three confectionary manufacturing jobs were lost.

"Chicago used to be the candy capital of the world and now we are giving away Illinois jobs because the government mandates high sugar prices to protect the powerful sugar industry," Kirk said. "This Valentine's Day is not so sweet for thousands of Americans who lost their jobs. These families deserve better."

According to the report, U.S. companies pay more than twice the cost per pound of refined sugar compared to world prices. The Commerce Department says this puts U.S. food companies "at a competitive disadvantage" with their foreign counterparts.

The job loss in sugar-containing food manufacturing stands in stark contrast to the job creation seen in non-sugar containing food manufacturing. In the same five year period, the non-sugar sector saw an increase in more than 31,000 jobs.

"Business as usual in the sugar industry must come to an end before more American jobs are handed overseas," Kirk said. "Chicagoans do not want to see another candy company go under because a few sugar growers wanted to make an extra buck."

Kirk commissioned the report in 2004 shortly after Chicago-based Fannie May's parent company, Archibald Candy Corp., shocked the candy industry by filing for bankruptcy and Confections Inc. moved its Brach's production facilities to Mexico.

"I want to applaud the bipartisan leadership of Mayor Daley and Congressman Danny Davis (D-IL) on this issue. They agree with me that we need to reform the anti-jobs federal sugar

program,” Kirk said.

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